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Amateur dancers up for showdown



Courtesy of Marlboro Country Nights Dance Showdown
Damon D'Amico and Lisa Harriman, a championship country dance couple from Katy, Texas, will perform at the regional and national competitions of the Marlboro Country Nights Dance Showdown. The local club competition will kick into action on Oct. 2, Oct. 9 and Oct. 16 at Graham Central Station.

Times Record News

Graham Central Station will be getting into the swing of things with the Marlboro Country Nights Showdown.

The dance competition will begin with two preliminary rounds at 7 p.m. Oct. 2 and Oct. 9. Winners from those rounds will vie for the club title at 7 p.m. Oct. 16.

The Showdown, dubbed the nation's richest and largest amateur dance competition, begins with local club-level competitions, like the Graham Central Station event. Winners at the club championship level then advance to one of five regional championships. Regional champions advance to the national finals slated for Dec. 4 at Cowboys in Arlington, Texas.

Those who step into the competition at the club level are eligible to win \$850 in cash prizes — \$100 to the third-place winner, \$250 to the second-place winner, and \$500 to the first-place winner. Regional champs take home \$1,500, and national winners get \$10,000.

"We're looking for amateurs," said Carolyn High, local coordinator of the event who teaches dance through the Parks and Recreation

Just the facts:

What: The Marlboro Country Nights Dance Showdown

Where: At Graham Central Station, 4105 Maplewood Ave.

When: At 7 p.m. Oct. 2 and Oct. 9 for the preliminary rounds and at 7 p.m. Oct. 16 for the club championship

Information: Call Graham Central Station at 691-7441 or Carolyn High at 855-8150

Department.

To be eligible for the competition, you have to be 21 years old and not employed as a dance instructor. Competitors who have previously competed as a couple or with another partner in a Division III sanctioned competition are not eligible to compete.

Don't count the two-step as the one and only country dance at this competition, because contestants will be required to dance three dances — the two-step, waltz and the swing (with an option of dancing the East Coast or West Coast swing). Contestants will be divided into small groups to execute their quick-footed techniques.

Judges will rate couples on technique, choreography and showmanship. Couples will be ranked from first to last place with the couple with the lowest score declared the winner.

High said there's no entry fee for the competition, and dancers can sign up through Oct. 9 at Graham Central Station.